

DISASTROUS 26 MINUTES

Maidstone United 3, Wycombe Wanderers 1

WYCOMBE WANDERERS' defence which had been beaten on only three occasions in 450 minutes of Isthmian League football, cracked wide open on Saturday to double the total in a disastrous opening 26 minutes at Maidstone.

The defence must take a full share of the blame for this shock defeat. Wycombe's defenders lacked concentration, authority and displayed an alarming lack of indecision, especially where it matters most — in the penalty area!

Even the usual so-reliable Julian Lailey was sadly out of touch putting passes astray. Dave Thomas in one of the link roles looked uncomfortable, trying hard to contribute towards the match but without much success.

It was asking too much from the Wanderers forwards to pull back such a deficit but on the final account of play they had the opportunities.

Weighed down

Weighed down with this burden they kept the pressure on a suspect Maidstone defence forcing eight corners in the second half. They were unable to score from any of them and one gained the impression, as the game proceeded, they were becoming over anxious and too hasty about their finishing.

There was no real secret behind Maidstone's victory. All they had to offer was enthusiasm and hard-running, yet these two basic ingredients were enough to unsettle Wycombe's brittle rearguard.

Wanderers' troubles started straight from the second minute when in their first attack Maidstone forced a corner. Craig's flag-kick was headed on by Angel to Long, who standing all alone just seven yards out, left Maskell helpless.

MATCH DETAILS

Maidstone United:
Carey; McAllister, Evans;
Wladyslaw, Riddy, Long;
Osborne, Angel, Coppin,
Stolliery, Craig. Sub:
Whittingham.

Wycombe Wanderers:
Maskell; Rundle, Lailey,
Faulkner, Gale; Baker,
Thomas; Busby, Samuels,
Horseman, Merrick. Sub:
Reid.

Corners: Wycombe 12,
Maidstone 3.

Free-kicks (conceded):
Maidstone 8, Wycombe 5.
Attendance: 512.

For the next 15 minutes Wycombe were territorially in command and while one or two openings were created, including two shots cleared off the line, there was already a hint from the forwards that they lacked real penetration up front.

Maidstone's eager forwards split open Wanderers' paper-mache defence again in the 24th and 26th minutes. Goalkeeper John Maskell was partially at fault for the second and must take the full responsibility for conceding number three.

Craig was given yards of room to bring under control Angel's pass and his task was made easier by Maskell advancing just a fraction too soon. Maidstone's third came from Evans' corner, which Maskell should have cut out. The cross reached Coppin, standing by the far post, and his headed pass found Craig who swept the ball in.

Two minutes before the break Barry Baker slammed a fierce drive against the bar and from the rebound Tony Horseman poked the ball home.

Wanderers clearly dominated the second half — throwing both Faulkner and Rundle up into the attack but when the goal-scoring chances presented themselves they were wasted by rash shooting.

Maidstone 3 Wycombe 1

MAIDSTONE CLINCHED their first Isthmian League win of the season with a first-half goal burst that rocked Wycombe, who had only conceded three goals in their first five games.

Maidstone took the lead after two minutes with a Paddy Long goal. Then winger Bob Craig made it 3-0 with goals in the 24th and 26th minutes.

Wycombe cut Maidstone's lead two minutes before half-time through Tony Horseman.